

## 60.PROTA: a useful tool for forest and tree plantations management in Tropical Africa

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A good management of a natural forest depends on a good knowledge of the uses of all the trees species growing in that forest. These uses are generally not well known and may be cause of conflicts between stakeholders. Only a few number of tree species are planted at a large scale because of a lack of knowledge on other promising species: biological properties, nursery and planting techniques. However, the information exists somewhere: research has been done for over a century; but this knowledge is scattered, often through grey literature, and difficult to find and consult. The main objective of Prota (Plant Resources of Tropical Africa) encyclopaedia is to collect and synthesize scattered information on 8,000 useful plants of Tropical Africa and among them 1,100 are timber trees. Prota aims to provide a wide access to that information through Webdatabases, Books, CD-Roms and Special Products. "Timbers" is founded by ITTO and translated by CTA. So, PROTA is a fully bilingual (English/French) information system. Actually 700 timber species are freely accessible on the Prota Webdatabase. A short presentation on how to use that database is given.

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